

SYN. NO. _____

AGN. NO. _____

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR ZEV YAROSLAVSKY

October 25, 2005

For more than 50 years, young women in California under the age of 18 have received the full range of pregnancy related health care services available to their adult counterparts.

In recent years, however, there has been a concerted effort to limit their reproductive freedom by creating legal and statutory barriers to their right to choose. In 1987, for example, the Legislature amended state law to impose additional burdens on young women seeking abortions.

Those provisions were challenged in court and were eventually struck down in 1997, but today those who oppose a woman's right to choose have mounted another assault on reproductive freedom with Proposition 73 on the November 8, 2005 ballot.

Prop. 73 is a proposed initiative constitutional amendment that would require a mandatory waiting period and parental notification, with rare exceptions, before a minor living at home may obtain an abortion. Young girls who find themselves pregnant, frightened and vulnerable would face a grim choice between asking permission from parents who may be shaming, blaming, punishing or abusive - or trying to navigate on their own through a confusing and often indifferent juvenile and appellate court system.

In addition, Prop. 73 goes far beyond the parental consent issue, inserting

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language into the state constitution that would actually redefine abortion as causing "death of the unborn child, a child conceived but not yet born." Nobody knows what these words may mean when interpreted by government policy-makers and the courts. Voters should not insert language whose ramifications are completely unknown into the California Constitution, our fundamental state law.

Prop. 73 starts with a flawed premise: that a statewide constitutional amendment can succeed where individual family communication has failed. But this is not really about starting discussion - it's about stopping abortion. The sponsors' true agenda is to make obtaining an abortion not just inconvenient, but increasingly impossible for as many women as possible.

The state Legislative Analyst has concluded that Prop. 73 would cost taxpayers millions of dollars in additional spending for health and social services programs, court operations, and state administrative expenses.

Imposing additional taxpayer cost while curtailing existing constitutional rights is a poor bargain and poor public policy.

I, THEREFORE MOVE THAT the Board of Supervisors formally express its opposition to curtailing the reproductive rights of young California women, and urge a NO vote on Proposition 73 on the November 8, 2005 special election ballot.

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